



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 1, 2004

H.R. 4887

Cumberland Island Wilderness Boundary Adjustment Act of 2004

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on September 22, 2004

H.R. 4887 would exclude three roads from land designated as wilderness or potential wilderness on Cumberland Island, a national seashore in Georgia. Under the bill, the National Park Service (NPS) would have to provide island visitors with between five and eight round-trips daily over these roads and would be authorized to enter into a limited number of concessions contracts for this purpose. Finally, the bill would authorize the NPS to add about 230 acres to the wilderness area if that land is acquired by the agency under existing authority.

Eliminating the national wilderness designations from the island's roads and allowing private concessioners to use them would likely facilitate the development of Plum Orchard, an historic estate owned by the NPS that currently has little recreational use because it is only accessible to visitors by boat or on foot. The NPS has already spent more than \$2 million to restore the mansion. CBO expects that the agency would spend another \$6 million to complete the mansion's restoration even without legislation, but we believe that the project would become more expensive if the old estate is developed for visitor uses—a scenario that is likely under this legislation. As a result, we estimate that the cost of implementing the bill would be about \$5 million over the next five years, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. This amount would be used to convert the mansion for visitor use and to provide a staging area for tourist traffic at an existing boat landing area. Alternatively, the necessary amounts could be provided by a future concessioner or lessee in exchange for lower franchise fees, but CBO has no basis for predicting such an outcome.

CBO estimates that adding the 230 acres of property to the wilderness area of the island would have no significant cost. The NPS is already authorized to accept donation of the acreage, which is currently owned by a nonprofit organization. Finally, by allowing concession companies to operate on the island's roads, enacting the bill could result in additional franchise-fee income to the federal government. Any such increases in offsetting receipts would be offset by additional direct spending, however, resulting in no net budgetary impact.

H.R. 4887 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.